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INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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<b>COUNTRY</b>	USSR (Uzbek SSR)	<b>REPORT</b>	
<b>SUBJECT</b>	1. Conditions in Golodnaya Step Sovkhozy	<b>DATE DISTR.</b>	7 April 1960
	2. Conditions and Construction Work in Golodnaya Step	<b>NO. PAGES</b>	2
		<b>REFERENCES</b>	
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SOURCE EVALUATIONS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

1. [redacted] by 1965, which is the deadline for finishing the Golodnaya Step project, Yangi-Yer (N 40-17, E 68-48) is supposed to become the largest town in the area, much larger than Mirzachul (N 40-29, E 68-46).<sup>1</sup> In order to meet the 1965 deadline, all construction work was pushed hard and work continued throughout the entire winter period. [redacted] the Soviets would never be able to meet the 1965 deadline, and that only ten percent of the whole area would be cultivated. The salt problem in this area was not [redacted] being solved adequately by the Soviet authorities. The water was purified by adding chlorine, limestone, and soda. As a result, 20 to 30 percent of the workers in the area developed kidney stones within two years and had to leave Golodnaya Step.
2. [redacted] the Krasnaya Zarya Sovkhoz cultivation plan. [redacted] This sovkhoz had certain advantages, such as ample water supply from the Syr-Darya River, easy working conditions because the land was flat, and the soil was fertile sand, as indicated by the 30-to-90-centimeter-high shrubbery. But the great dust storms that were prevalent in the area would affect the quality of the cotton yield, and although the sovkhoz

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would reach its ~~quantitative goal~~, the quality of the production would be unsatisfactory.

3. Construction work on Velikiy Aleksey Sovkhoz was much more advanced than in Krasnaya Zarya. The 300 construction workers employed were divided into 25 teams. Of the 25 teams [redacted] another consisted entirely of criminals. and the rest of the workers came from all parts of the USSR, eager to make fast money. [redacted] the employment of 60 Komsomol member as helpers to fulfill their two-year work term after finishing high school. Most of the helpers were girls, and they were ordered to perform the hardest manual tasks. They received 12 rubles per day. In 1957 one girl committed suicide by jumping into one of the irrigation ditches. The administration claimed this was an accident, but everyone in the sovkhos knew this was a cover-up for the true fact.
4. [redacted] all the people at these sovkhosy were of the opinion that nothing could be grown in that area because of the high salt content of the soil. If the water in a 12-liter bucket was evaporated, a layer of salt about one centimeter remained on the bottom. When questioned by the workers about this disadvantage, the administrators reassured them that by 1960 something would be invented which would eliminate the salt.

5. The following reports on Golodnaya Step [redacted]

Attachment 1: [redacted] report of a very general nature on construction of prefabricated houses in the town of Yangi-Yer.

Attachment 2: [redacted] report on construction and conditions in the Krasnaya Zarya Sovkhoz and the Velikiy Aleksey Sovkhoz. Fairly detailed description is given of the type of houses constructed and the quality of construction, with comments on the type of workers used, location, etc. Earnings were from 3,000 to 3,500 rubles per month.

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COUNTRY USSR (Uzbek SSR)

REPORT

SUBJECT Conditions in the Golodnaya Step'  
Sovkhozos.

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1. In September 1956 a team of about twelve [ ] applied at the "SU 2" (Stroitel'noye Upravleniye - Construction Administration) on Ulitsa Navoy, Tashkent, for work in the construction projects of Golodnaya Step'. Upon presentation of their personal identification papers, they were hired with the promise that each would earn from 3,000 to 3,500 rubles per month. They were immediately dispatched to the sovkhos Krasnaya Zarya where they worked for two weeks. From there they were transferred to the sovkhos Velikiy Aleksey.

2. Sovkhos Krasnaya Zarya

- a. This sovkhos was located 38 kilometers east of the town of Mirzachul' (H 40-29, E 68-46) and two kilometers west of the river Syr-Darya.
- b. When the [ ] team arrived, only two tents had been set up, one belonging to the work superintendent (prorab) Petrenko (fnu), and the other belonging to the bookkeeper Ivan Ivanovich (lnu), a Jew. The [ ] team's first job was to pitch tents for its members.
- c. Krasnaya Zarya was intended to be a cotton growing sovkhos, and it was to be irrigated by the waters of the Syr-Darya river. The plan called for all buildings to be erected, all irrigation ditches finished, and all fields under

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cultivation by 1960. After five years cultivation, that is by 1965, the sovkhos should be able to meet its quota.

- d. The Greek team was to erect prefabricated houses. Trucks were sent to the town of Mirzashul' to pick up the parts for the prefabricated houses and the necessary building materials. The houses were nine meters by five and one half meters in size, consisting of four rooms and a corridor. Each house was intended for two families and therefore contained two ovens and two stoves. The cooking and heating was done by coal which came from the town of Angren in great quantities, but which was of rather low quality. Each house had to be finished in two days, giving each team member an income of 30 to 90 rubles per day, much less than was promised in Tashkent. As soon as a house was finished, only administrative personnel such as bookkeepers, typists, agronomists, etc. moved in. [redacted] no workers (sovkhosniki) occupied these houses. 50X1-HUM
- e. In erecting the prefabricated houses, the speed but not the quality of the workmanship was essential. Most of the construction orders were disregarded. For instance, the houses should have had a 70 centimeter deep solid concrete foundation, but in actuality the foundation ditch was made only 40 centimeters deep, rocks were thrown in and everything was covered with a layer of concrete. The houses were also supposed to be well plastered on the outside, but the team merely spread mud on the walls and whitewashed the mud. Consequently every house required complete repair twice a year, and this was usually done before the two important Soviet holidays, the 7th of November and the 1st of May. The cost to the sovkhos in building these houses was 15,000 to 16,000 rubles, 28% (or 4,000 to 4,500 rubles) of which should have been for labor. But the construction team was actually only paid 1,300 rubles per house. 50X1-HUM
- f. [redacted] the Krasnaya Zarya cultivation plan. [redacted] this sovkhos had certain advantages, such as ample water supply from the Syr-Darya river, easy working conditions because the land was flat, and the soil was fertile sand, as indicated by the 30 to 90 centimeter high shrubbery. But the great duststorms that were prevalent in the area would affect the quality of the cotton yield, and although the sovkhos would reach its goal quantity wise, the quality of the production would be unsatisfactory.

### 3. Sovkhos Velikiy Aleksey

- a. This sovkhos was located three to four kilometers east of the old kolkhos "Velikiy Aleksey". [redacted] this kolkhos, about twenty-five kilometers north of Mirzashul' on the Tashkent-Degovat Railroad line, was not a town as Soviet maps indicate, but consisted of less than a hundred mud huts inhabited by cattle-and-sheep-raising Uzbeks. 50X1-HUM
- b. The sovkhos contained an administrative center (upravleniye) for building the sovkhoses which were considered sections (uchastok) of this center. Velikiy Aleksey was the first section of the center; the other two sovkhoses to be built were the "Sotsializm" and the "Oktyabr'skaya Revolyutsiya".
- c. Construction work on Velikiy Aleksey was much more advanced than in Krasnaya Zarya. The three hundred construction workers employed were divided into twenty-five teams. Of the twenty-five teams [redacted] consisted entirely of criminals, and the rest of the workers came from all parts of the USSR eager to make fast money. 50X1-HUM
- d. The team of criminals consisted of ten members all of whom had been sentenced to long prison terms. They were required to live in one house, they were fed in a mess hall by the sovkhos, they received clothing from the sovkhos administration, and were given 125 rubles per month pocket money. They were not guarded, but they could not leave the premises because they had no identification papers. Each individual was given an assessment (kharakteristika)

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(kharakteristika) and his sentence commuted accordingly. Because of this they were well-behaved and worked hard. At best their sentences could be reduced to one sixth.

- e. Besides the three hundred construction workers, the construction division employed about sixty Komsomol members as helpers. They were about eighteen to twenty years old, and two-thirds of them were girls. They had been sent from the Ukraine to serve their two-year term after finishing high school. These youngsters were exploited to the fullest; they were ordered to perform the hardest manual tasks, such as carrying bricks and cement bags, repairing roads, digging ditches. They worked from sunrise to sundown and were given twelve rubles per day with which they had to buy their own food. In 1957 one girl committed suicide by jumping into one of the irrigation ditches. The administration claimed this was an accident, but everyone in the sovkhos knew this was a cover-up for the true fact.

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- f. Between October 1956 and March 1958 [ ] team built about seventy pre-fabricated houses, a brick two-story club house, and office building, and a school. [ ] none of the ground had been plowed, and no irrigation ditches had been dug, notwithstanding the fact that all three sovkhoses should have plowed their fields by 1960 in order to meet their quota by 1965.

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4. [ ] all the people at these sovkhoses were of the opinion that nothing could be grown in that area because of the high salt content in the soil. The water from the local wells tasted brackish; i.e., if the water in a twelve-liter bucket was evaporated, a layer of salt, about one centimeter thick, remained on the bottom. When questioned by the workers about this disadvantage, the administrators reassured them that by 1960 something would be invented which would eliminate the salt.

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COUNTRY USSR (Uzbek SSR)

REPORT

SUBJECT Observations on Conditions and  
Construction Work in the Golodnaya Step'.

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SOURCE EVALUATIONS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

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1. [redacted] the construction of the future town of Yangi-Yer (U 40-17, E 68-48) [redacted] was being developed as the administrative center for all construction work going on in the Golodnaya Step' area. Yangi-Yer was located 15 kilometers south of the Velikiy Alekseevskiy station of the Tashkent-Begovat railroad. 50X1-HUM
2. [redacted] by 1965, which is the deadline for finishing the Golodnaya Step' project, Yangi-Yer is supposed to become the largest town in the area, much larger than Mirzachul' (U 40-29, E 68-46). 50X1-HUM
3. [redacted] the main emphasis in construction work was in the erection of prefabricated houses for future workers, and in the building of huge concrete walls with metal flood gates along the river Syr-Darya. It was planned to use the waters of the Syr-Darya for future irrigation needs and not for the production of power. 50X1-HUM
4. In order to meet the 1965 deadline, all construction work was pushed hard and work continued throughout the entire winter period. Each construction team had special open ovens where the sand and the water for cement mixing could be pre-heated. The work stopped only during the most severe sandstorms of the summer. When an average wind was blowing everyone put on protective goggles and kept working. 50X1-HUM
5. The "salt problem" in the Golodnaya Step' region was not [redacted] being solved sufficiently by the Soviet authorities. Yangi-Yer was far from the river Syr-Darya and did not have a drop of regular sweet water. The purification process of the salt water which was pumped from artesian wells was very primitive. The

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water was pumped into large open metal containers where just chlorine, limestone, and soda were added to it; this water was then supposedly fit for human consumption. Under these conditions, 20 to 30 per cent of the workers in the Golodnaya Step' developed kidney stones within two years and had to leave the area.

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6. [ ] the Golodnaya Step' region [ ] two sov'hozy:

a. Sovkhoz Gulistan - located 25 kilometers east of Mirzachul.

b. Sovkhoz Krasnaya Zarya - located seven kilometers south of Sovkhoz Gulistan.

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